



Forest Plan Revision

Chippewa National Forest



Superior National Forest

NEWSLETTER April 2003

Proposed Plans and Draft Analysis Available in May

The Chippewa and Superior National Forests will release two Proposed Forest Plans and one Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in May 2003 for public review.

The Forest Service asks for the public to review and comment on the draft documents. We encourage you to participate now at a time when we can meaningfully consider your ideas and respond before a decision is made. The Forest Service will consider all written or emailed comments but will only be able to address substantive comments that have specific concerns or suggestions.

The public comment period will begin when the documents are announced in the Federal Register, approximately May 9. The comment period will continue for three months until August 11. Substantive comments will help tailor the final analysis in the EIS, leading to the final revised Forest Plans in approximately January 2004.

In addition to the Proposed Forest Plans and Draft EIS, an Executive Summary for the Draft EIS, large-scale color maps of the alternatives, and a Reviewers' Guide will be available.

Purpose and Need

Revise Forest Plans to:

- Meet the objectives of federal law and regulations
- Respond to the public's needs and desires
- Manage ecosystems to provide for long-term sustainability

What's it All About?

The analysis in the Draft EIS and the management direction in the Proposed Plans are driven by a Purpose and Need for change. Early in the revision process, issues defined the scope of the analysis in the EIS.

The Draft EIS documents potential environmental impacts from seven different ways of managing the National Forests. The analysis focuses on specific resource issues and alternatives, which were identified through public involvement and internal discussion.

The Proposed Plans provide management direction for the two Forests for the next 10 to 15 years.

The Forest Plans are strategies for managing the National Forest. The function of the Forest Plans is to coordinate multiple uses, including outdoor recreation, timber, watersheds, wildlife and fish, and wilderness. Forest plans also provide direction on sustained yield of products and services; although, they do not make site-specific decisions.

The Proposed Forest Plans are based on the alternative that is currently the Forest Service's preferred alternative, which is identified in the Draft EIS. In the Proposed Forest Plans, goals and desired conditions address the Purpose and Need as it relates to one or more resource issues. Objectives, standards, and guidelines provide direction on the "how" and "when" to accomplish the desired condition. The distribution of Management Areas determines "where" management will take place. The Forests are divided up into Management Areas, which are areas with similar management objectives and emphasis.

Tips for Reviewing and Commenting on Documents

It is not necessary for you to read every page of the Draft EIS and Proposed Plans to understand and comment on their contents.

It is important to understand the purpose and need behind Forest Plan Revision. In your review, you will also want to be aware of the relationship among different documents and how the Forest Service responds to comments. A reviewer's guide will be included with each copy of the Draft EIS and Proposed Plans to help readers navigate and comment on these large documents.

Hints on Reviewing

1. Get oriented by looking at the Reviewers' Guide
2. Read the Executive Summary of the Draft EIS
3. Pick out parts of the Proposed Forest Plans that interest you and read those.
4. If you want more information, go to the full Draft EIS.

Perhaps you have already been involved in identifying issues and developing alternatives in the Forest Plan Revision process. Now is your opportunity to have your say again and let the Forest Service know if we "hit the mark" on the issues and alternatives in the Draft EIS and on the management direction presented in the Proposed Forest Plans.

There are a few important points you need to know about how the Forest Service responds to comments and how we can both get the most out of your review of these documents. A **substantive comment** provides information, professional opinion, or informed judgment that is relevant to the action being proposed.

-  Substantive comments are specific, comparative, or solution-oriented.
-  This is not a voting process. Comments are considered on basis of content not quantity.
-  We will consider all comments on the Draft EIS and Proposed Plans; however, we can only provide detailed responses to substantive comments.
-  The Final EIS will document substantive comments and Forest Service responses.
-  The decision maker will consider substantive comments and may cited them in the Record of

Decision.

Got Documents?

Our Mailing List

Documents will be mailed directly to the list of people that responded to the feedback form in the last newsletter. They should arrive in the mail approximately May 2.

Public Sites

Reference copies of the documents will be available at several university and community libraries. These documents will also be posted on the Forest Plan Revision web site beginning approximately on April 28, 2003.

Contact Us

If you did not send a feedback form and would like copies of these documents, contact us through one of the following means and please indicate which documents you wish to receive and whether you want them in paper form or electronically on a CD-ROM.

Something New!

A new product will soon be available on the Chippewa and Superior revision web page - the Forest Plan Revision MAPSERVER. Using the MAPSERVER application, you can display maps, zoom in and out, and turn available features on and off, so you can see exactly what you want. You can link off the Forest Plan Revision Web Page or go directly to: www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa/plan/planning.htm and select MAPSERVER.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Forest Plan revision will not change management direction in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Therefore, the Forest Service will not consider comments on that section of the Superior National Forest Plan at this time.

Visit Us

National Forest offices will host Open Houses to help distribute the draft documents.

May 6, Tuesday 4pm – 7pm

Walker Ranger District Office
201 Minnesota Ave. East
Walker, MN

Tofte Ranger District Office
7355 West Highway 61
Tofte, MN

Superior National Forest Supervisors Office
8901 Grand Ave Place
Duluth MN

May 7, Wednesday 4pm – 7pm

Chippewa National Forest Supervisors Office
200 Ash Ave. Cass Lake, MN

Deer River Ranger
District Office
1037 Division Street
Deer River, MN

Kawishiwi Ranger District Office
118 S. 4th Ave, East
Ely, MN

La Croix/Laurentian Ranger District – Joint Open House
Wouri Township Hall
County Road # 307, Virginia, MN

May 8, Thursday 4pm – 7pm

Blackduck Ranger District Office
417 Forestry Drive
Blackduck MN

Gunflint Ranger District Office
2020 W. Highway 61
Grand Marais, MN

USDA Forest Service
North Central Research Station
1992 Folwell Ave.
St. Paul, MN

What's Next?

We have come a long way towards revising the Forest Plans. There are still a few more steps left in the process:

June 2003 Public meetings – The Forest Service will hold six centralized meetings to answer questions and discuss specific concerns about the Draft EIS and Proposed Plans. Time, place, and location to-be-announced.

Comments – Must be received by close of business, Monday, August 11.

Content Analysis – The Forest Service will read and respond to all comments received. Results will be documented in the Final EIS and in Content Analysis Report (available to the public).

Final EIS – Final Environmental Impact Statement expected in January 2004. Based on Responses to the Draft EIS.

Record of Decision – Expected in January 2004 and will accompany the Final EIS.

Final Revised Forest Plans – Expected in January 2004.

Implementation – The revised Forest Plans will be implemented for the next 10 to 15 years. Implementation will require site-level analyses and public involvement.

For more information or to request documents:

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Forest Plan Revision web site
www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa/plan/planning.